

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF RURAL COUNTIES RE-OPERATION OF HYDROELECTRIC FACILITIES

Hydro-electric energy has been deregulated in California. PG & E is selling its hydro-power facilities and reservoirs. The water storage of these reservoirs can solve many of California's most pressing water supply, environmental, and economic problems in both rural and urban California. Local governments need to purchase and re-operate these facilities for widespread benefit of all regions of California.

Each individual facility should be locally owned and publicly managed for long-term improvement in the state's economy and environment. A "right of first refusal" should be granted to county government in the county in which a project is located. This "right of first refusal" is an opportunity to keep faith with long-term commitments in California's water code to preserve water for future growth in the areas of origin.

Owners of these hydro-power facilities should be required to assist in the environmental restoration of California's rivers and streams to improve the long-term health of California's citizens. These facilities should be allowed to transfer water under beneficial conditions to others in need. The local entity owning the water would be required to make an investment in water use efficiencies and to assist in watershed maintenance and enhancement.